GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY
LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:1161
ANSWERED ON:29.11.2006
TELEPHONE NETWORKS IN RURAL AND TRIBAL AREAS
Mandal Shri Sanat Kumar;Singh Deo Smt. Sangeeta Kumari;Yadav Shri Giridhari

Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) Whether telephone networks have not been set up in remote, rural and tribal areas which are technically viable;

(b) If so, the reasons therefor; and

(c)The details of works undertaken by the Government during the last two years in this regard?

Answer

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (DR. SHAKEEL AHMAD)

(a) to (c) As of now, more than 90% of villages in the country have been provided telephone facilities. Universal Service Obligation Fund (USOF) entered into an agreement with Bharat Sanchar Nigam Limited (BSNL) in November, 2004 for provision of Village Public Telephones (VPTs) in remaining 66,822 unconnected villages in the country. This excludes villages having population less than 100, lying in thick forest areas/naxalite infested areas etc. Out of these, 36,014 villages have already been provided with VPTs by BSNL as on 31st October, 2006. The remaining 30,808 villages will be provided VPTs progressively by November, 2007. Private Service Providers are generally hesitant to provide services in remote, rural and tribal areas due to consideration of commercial viability.

Details of other works undertaken by the Government to provide telecom facilities in rural and remote areas of the country including tribal areas during the last two years are as follows:

(i)Provision of Rural Community Phones (RCPs) in villages with population more than 2000 and where there are no Public Call Offices (PCOs) - As on 31st October, 2006, 33,239 RCPs have been provided.

(ii)Replacement of 1,86,872 Multi Access Radio Relay (MARR) VPTs - As on 31st October, 2006, 1,63,436 MARR VPTs have been replaced.

(iii)Provision of Rural individual phone connections (RDELs) on demand in 1685 commercially unviable Short Distance Charging Areas (SDCAs) - As on 31st October, 2006, 11,13,638 RDELs have been provided.

(iv) In addition, subsidy is being provided for about 1.09 crore DELs installed in rural areas.